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OR

THE ASPECT OF THE BIBLE

TOWARDS THE

SLAVEDOM OF THE SOUTH.

BY WILLIAM MORRIS,
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"TO THE LAW AND TO THE TESTIMONY! IF THEY SPEAK NOT ACCORDING TO THIS WORD, IT IS BECAUSE THERE IS NO LIGHT IN THEM."—*Isaiah.*

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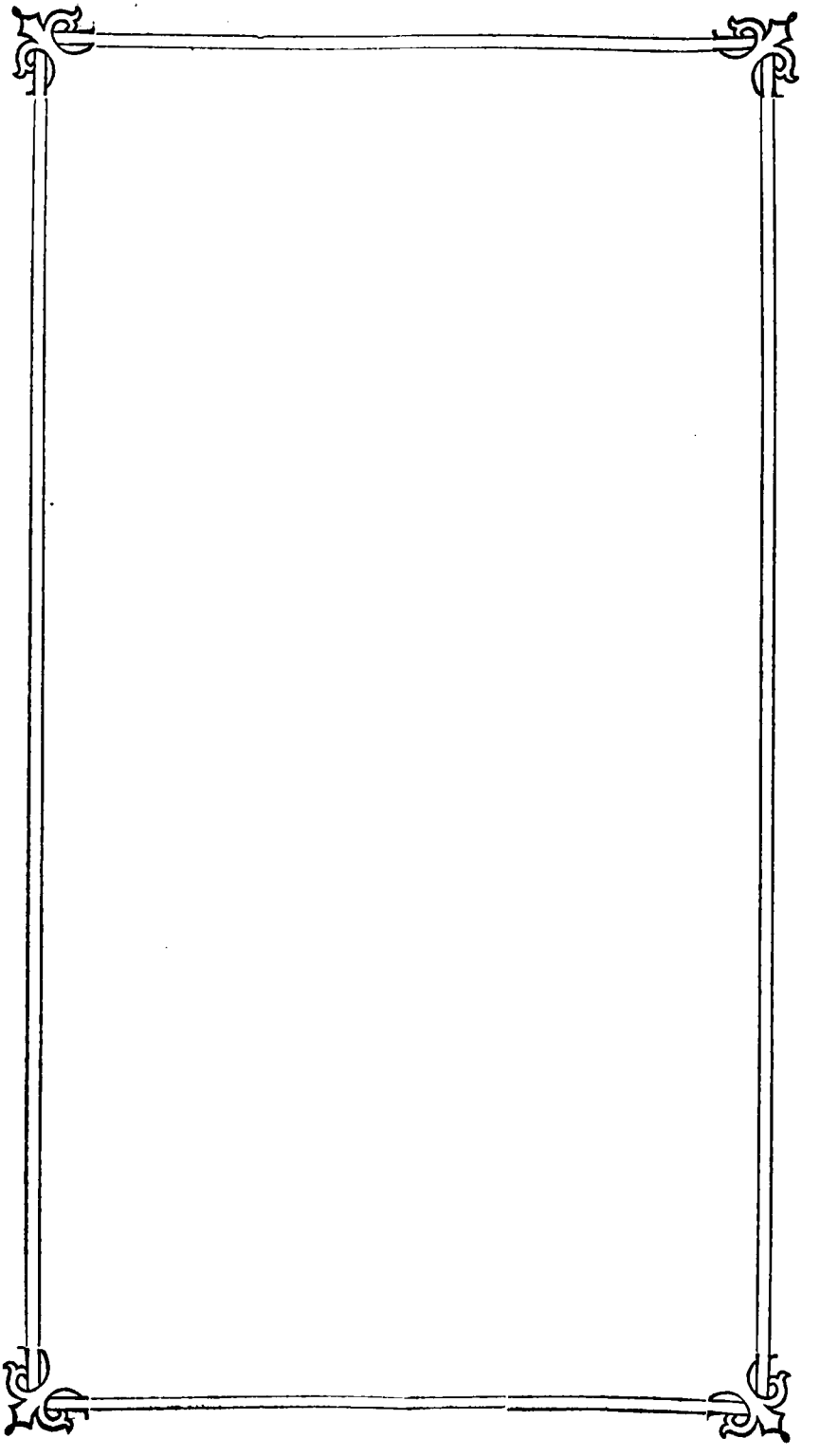

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THE ASPECT OF THE BIBLE TOWARDS THE SLAVEDOM OF THE SOUTH.

The theme for the hour, is—*The aspect of the Bible towards the Slavedom of the South.*

This subject does not admit of impassioned declamation; neither does it require the adornments of inspiring eloquence; but it does demand a calm and impartial investigation.

My chief design is to defend the Bible—to defend it against the aspersions of skepticism, induced by an evil use of its authority and name: For I believe the Book as I believe the sun in the heavens; and know that its attributes are holiness and truth, and honor and right.

The advocates of slavedom claim the Bible as the *Magna Charta* of their institution. They affirm, "that God himself established chattel slavery, and that the Bible is its foundation." In this they are sustained by certain Professors of Theology, and accredited teachers of the church.

Are these learned and clerical authorities entitled to respect? They challenge investigntion, and they should be honorably met. They assume an imposing attitute, and over the advocates of slavedom they hold the ægis of theological protection. Is their theology false or true? As armor-bearers of men in "high places," and of aspirants after political power, they bear that which claims to be the shield of the Divinity; and on that shield they have engraved the words, "*Refrain from these men, and let them alone; lest haply ye be found to fight, even against God.*"

Is that shield of celestial temper? And is that motto the admonition of heavenly wisdom? These questions must be decided by the actual teachings of the Bible, to which I am now to appeal.

The advocates of slavery have appealed to the Bible, and by its decisions their appeal must be tried. "To the law and to

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the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."

They affirm that "a prophetic curse, uttered by Noah, has doomed the negro tribes to chattel slavery."

For this purpose they cite the words, "Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be to his brethren."—(Gen. ix: 25.) By so doing, they declare slavery to be a curse; and themselves the executive of that curse; and they maintain, that—in some distinguishing sense—the citizens of the South are the seed of the impious Ham.

The prophetic curse thus claimed and appropriated, must be considered. The original word for "servant," is עֶבֶד *"geh'-ved,* from the verb עָבַד *"gah-vad'*, which means, to labor; and, also, to serve, be subservient, secondary or subject.

Its earlier applications are made to gardening, agriculture, and the care of flocks. It is thus applied to Adam, in paradise; and to Jacob, when he "served for a wife."

The verb and noun, together, occur more than a thousand times in the Hebrew Bible; and in only a few instances do they bear any kind of relation to social servitude, as including the idea of a legal obligation to serve. When such is the case, there is a peculiarity in the manner of their application; because they are not then used in accordance with the ideal meaning of the Hebrew root.

The genius of the Hebrew language does not admit of the idea of chattel slavery, or man's assumed right to the body and soul of his fellow man. It would not appear that the genius of any language, in use among civilized men, admits of the anti-natural idea. In the Anglo-Saxon language, the word *slave* is an exotic, derived from the appellation of a tribe of Sclavonians, called *slaef* or *sklâve.* It is known that the tyrant Charlemagne subjugated that people, and reduced them to cruel bondage; and when the Anglo-Saxons had robbed their fellow men of their natural and social birthright, they adopted the name of that tribe to describe the nefarious traffic and continuous wrong.

But, returning to the principal word in the Noachic curse, I remark, that its ordinary uses are to signify religious service, political subjection and social subordination.

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In reference to the service of the true God, it is used in a way that denotes distinguishing honor and especial regard. But, in common with most other words, it derives its particular force from the associations in which it is found. Our present concern is with its prophetic usage in the Books of Moses.

It is known that the earlier predictions of the Bible were national in their conception and design. This was the case in all the prophetic utterances of the patriarchs, over the heads of their sons and their grandsons; and before the sons of Isaac were born, a divine oracle had said, "the elder shall *serve* the younger." These embryo twins were the germs of two diverse nationalities, and the prediction was fulfilled by the political subjection of the Edomites to the Israelites, in the days of David and of Solomon. And the word used in that sacred oracle, to indicate such political subjection, is the origin of the word for servant, in Noah's prophetic curse.

That curse was not pronounced upon Ham, and therefore did not include the descendants of his four sons. Being pronounced on Canaan, the descendants of Cush, Mitzraim and Phut were designedly exempt; and it was in relation to them that the descendants of Canaan were to be in a state of extreme subordination; as it is said, "A servant *of servants* shall he be to *his brethren.*" The idea of subordination in comparison with, or in relation to the descendants of the other three sons of Ham, is thus intensified, in accordance with the laws and usages of the Hebrew tongue. But, the descendants of Canaan were to be actually subdued by those of Shem and of Japheth; as it is said, in the blessing pronounced, severally upon each of these, "and Canaan shall be his servant."—(Gen. ix: 26, 27.)

Now, suppose it were admissible that the original word for servant might mean a *slave*, in the unmitigated meaning of the South, of what advantage could this be to the advocates of Southern slavery? *None whatever!* For it could be at once shown that the curse was to descend on the heads of the Canaanites only; that it was the predicted penalty of their abominable and foreseen wickedness; and that the African tribes were not, by any means, included under that predicted curse.

Cush founded the original kingdom of Assyria; Mitzraim established the kingdom of the Pharaohs; and Phut, advancing

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into the interior of Africa, originated the Lybian empire; and from the latter the African tribes have descended; Canaan settled in Asia, having his principal territories near the eastern shores of the Mediterranean Sea. *Little children are aware of this.* And it is remarkable that it should not have received a passing regard from the learned Professors and Clergy of the South. This can be accounted for, only at the expense of one of the first principles of mental philosophy. In that science it is an acknowledged principle that "great minds condescend to small affairs; but, in respect to the theological literati of the South, this principle must be inverted, and it must be admitted that great minds can *not* condescend to small affairs; and the mental greatness of these learned gentlemen must be my apology for presenting a short lesson in ancient geography and history.

Moses concisely describes the frontier lines of the Canaanites. He says, "The border of the Canaanites was from Sidon, as thou goest to Gerar, unto Gaza: as thou goest unto Sodom and Gomorrah, and Adma and Zeboim, even unto Lasha."—(Gen. x: 19.)—Sidon was Canaan's first born; and the city and district of Sidon in Phenœcia, were called after his name. Heth was the brother of Sidon; and, on the death of Sarah, Abraham purchased a burial place among the sons of Heth.

The reference now made to Mosaic geography, reminds us that the Canaanites were an exceedingly wicked people, among whom the gross sensualness of Ham was fully developed and matured. This was foreseen by the Divine Ruler, and was a reason for the inspiration of the Noachic curse. The prediction that revealed their political degradation, included at the same time the moral reasons for its descent. In every instance of prophetic denunciation, the criminality is foreseen, and is the just reason why the judgment is expressed.

The descendants of Canaan are found at an early period, in a state of political subordination. Even in the days of Abraham—when "their iniquities were not yet full"—the Noachic wrath-vial had begun to be poured out. And such were the abominations of a part of them, that God could not suffer them to remain any longer on the earth; he therefore sent down the "eternal fire," by which themselves and their cities were utterly destroyed.—(Gen. xix: 24–28.)

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Progressing with the order of events, we find that when the Israelites entered upon the promised land, the Canaanites, who had defiled that land by their excessive criminality, were subjugated, and in great part destroyed, by the national descendants of Shem, in the line of Abraham. Those whose lives were spared, in the way of a reprieve, we shall again meet with when we come to examine the laws of Moses and of God.

The descendants of Japheth were also to subdue the Canaanites; and so it came to pass. Sidon had been humbled; but Tyre, the political offspring of Sidon, still reared its defiant head. In due time, however, Nebuchadnezzar besieged and took that city, and it was destroyed. But the Canaanites were a vivacious, as well as a wicked race, and a second Tyre arose on an island near the site of the first. This might prolong, but could not avert the calamity of the prophetic curse. Alexander of Macedon, and of the family of Japheth, came, and before him and his victorious Grecians, the last city of Tyre fell, and was no more.

Still, a remnant of the Canaanites seemed to have escaped the curse. They had taken refuge on the southern shore of the Mediterranean, and Carthage arose, to dispute with Rome the empire of the world. The Punic wars ensued. Hannibal, for a season, evinced his valor and his skill; his Canaanite hosts responded to the ambitious will of their leader, and he carried his victorious arms into the centre of Italy, and near to the gates of Rome. But, overtaken by reverses, and hampered by adverse counsels at home, he returned, and was overthrown:—

> The curse was impending—destruction must come;
> And Japheth must finish what Shem had begun.

The Roman legions completed the extirpation of the Canaanites; Scipio Africanus burned Carthage to the ground; thousands of its inhabitants perished in the flames; the Roman Senate decreed that the walls should be rased, so that no trace of the city or people might remain; and the predicted doom of the Canaanites was executed and sealed. The Noachic wrath-vial had been poured out to the dregs; and Canaan the accursed was no more. "Verily, there is a God that judgeth on the earth."

"*Cursed be Canaan,*" is a terrible word; but its thunder clouds never lowered over the heads of Africa's injured tribes.

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This evident truth is testified of by prophecy, geography and history; but the learned patrons of slavedom have sought to falsify the evidence, by a denial of the truth. They may have done so by reason of the transcendency of their intellectual powers; but, Satan is a *mighty intellect;* yet is he "the father of lies," and the author of every denial of the truths of God.

The learned advocates of slavery may possess a transcendency of intellectual greatness; but their moral qualities are exposed to just and reasonable doubt; for they have shown a kind of reckless and spasmodic daring, unusual in argument, and in the highest degree, unwise. They have sought a defence for their peculiar institution on the page that records the unnatural vileness of Ham; and they have so done, well knowing that the same kind of unnatural indecency is a characteristic of the unnatural system which they desire to see extended in the land. Beneath their own observation, the same kind of unnatural vileness is practised, even on defenseless and down-trodden woman; yet do they make haste to point out the curse which the impiety of Ham had called forth.

They tell us of the dark and withering curse, and are loud in claiming to be *the brethren of Canaan;* and most clearly does their system prove its moral affinity with Ham. But have they not known that in the procedure of the divine government, similar iniquities are followed by similar penalties? And if they know this, are they not found trifling with the divine forbearance, and thus hardening their hearts and the hearts of confederate nations? They may deny the truths of prophecy and of history, and may disregard the moral principles of the divine government over the nations; but "verily there is a God that judgeth on the earth."

Again:—These learned, but unwise patrons of slavedom, claim the history of Abraham for the sustainment of their cause. They are now convicted of being false to the bearings of prophecy, the delineations of geography and the records of history; but, on the defiant flag of slavedom they have displayed the revered name of Abraham, to whom God said, "I will bless thee, and make thy name great, and thou shalt be a blessing."

They allege that "Abraham was a slaveholder; that therefore, slavery is a patriarchal institution; and, being such, is a blessing

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to the slave." *They must be wonderful men!* For they have scarcely told us of a Noachic curse, before they tell us of an Abrahamic blessing. Their mental greatness is established, and their occult attainments are confessed. In knowledge and might they may challenge a comparison with the magicians of Pharaoh. For they have only to say, "*Presto, be changed,*" and instantly a dark curse is transmuted into a bright blessing! I marvel not at their zeal for its extension, but at one thing I do wonder! We are told that they are kind-hearted and charitable men, and I therefore marvel, that in the exuberance of their charity, they have not had compassion on us, in our forlorn estate, and have not sought to extend *their* blessing to ourselves. *But, a truce!*

I revere the name of Abraham, but inspiration has recorded his history; and therein his faults as well as his virtues are disclosed. Abraham was not called and blessed of God on account of his own worthiness; but by virtue of the infinite grace of his divine benefactor. He did believe and was obedient, but he did not always believe and obey; "for there is no man on earth that doeth good and sinneth not."

I would touch lightly on the faults of him, who, in after times, was called "the friend of God:" but the truth of history and the honor of the Bible, alike demand that some of them be told; and, even his own injured reputation requires the same, for his name must be vindicated.

With grief—but not reluctantly—I admit that Abraham did become tainted by contact with a southern institution. He went down to Egypt, and there he sinned in the matter of Sarah, and of slavery But the sins of ancient saints are not recorded as examples for imitation, but as beacons of admonition, that those who follow after may give heed. What reflective person would think of justifying adultery and manslaughter, because David once sinned so greatly in the matter of Bathsheba and Uriah? A thoughtful man would rather meditate on the philosophy of history, that he might gather just principles and conservative conclusions from the truth.

I will present in brief outline, a part of the history of Abraham, relative to the question at issue between the *lovers* of the Bible and the *slavers* of the South.

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Unauthorized by his divine Protector, Abraham went down to Egypt. On his way down he lost his moral courage, because he had lost sight of his faithful God, and he feared for his life. He had heard of the proclivities of the South, and how the contrastive charms of woman were there valued and admired; and Sarah was "fair to look upon," and beautiful as fair. He therefore feared for his life. He prevailed on Sarah to say she was his sister, and in these assumed relations they entered Egypt together. The courtiers admired the fair loveliness of Sarah, and they commended her to the King. Pharaoh had her immediately conveyed into his seraglio; and to Abraham he was bland and munificent on her account, for he gave him presents of such things as were valued in the South. Among these were men-servants and maid-servants, as a matter of course. These gifts Abraham received at the hand of Pharaoh; and *mark! they were the price of his own wife's virtue!* This was the relation they bore to the mind and conduct of Abraham, though not of Pharaoh; *and it was not until he had fallen thus low into the depths of moral evil, that he became tainted by contact with a Hamite institution.*

The God of the Bible could not tolerate such moral meanness in one whom he had promised to bless. He discovered the deception to Pharaoh; Sarah's honor was preserved; Abraham was rebuked and dismissed; he returned northward, a chastened and a wiser man. He took with him the servants he had received, and this movement northward was to them a virtual emancipation, for he took them out of the land of Egygt—"the house of bondage."—[Gen. xii: 9-20.]

No intelligent Christian, at all acquainted with the habitual faith and virtuousness of Abraham, could believe that he who was called "the friend of God," (2 Chron. xx: 7,) could deliberately approve and sustain the chattel slavery of "the land of Ham." He might, under the peculiar temptations of the South, fall into sin; but when restored by divine grace, he could not "continue in sin, that grace might abound." The testimony of God himself forbids the thought; for he says of Abraham, "I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judg-

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ment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him."

Abraham is again found in the land of promise, where he had become great, and where the men who went with him out of Egypt, and others also, had become a clan of free and voluntary retainers, devoted to the interest and honor of their intrepid chief.

But here the theological patrons of slavedom assert, "that Abraham held three hundred and eighteen slaves at one time."

At the period to which they refer, the tribes of Canaan had been subordinated by certain confederate kings, and had also rebelled against their political superiors. A war of re-subjection had ensued. The invading kings were victorious, and they departed with their captives and spoil; taking with them Lot, the nephew of Abraham. Tidings of these events reached Abraham, and he led forth a troop of three hundred and eighteen spearmen, overtook and defeated the five kings, rescued Lot, and returned to his tents, under the blessing of Melchizedek, the "priest of the Most High God."—[Gen. ch. xiv.)

But in Abraham's troop of spearmen, the wise men of the South have discovered three hundred and eighteen *slaves*—the prototypes of those on the cotton fields and cane brakes of their own favored clime; for, of course, the three hundred and eighteen were all "field hands." Abraham's domestic habits were in contrast with the dependent and luxurious habits of the South, they were, therefore, all "field hands"—*poor, miserable, crushed, toilworn chattels; with sinews, but no calves to their legs; with backs bowed down, and bellies glued to their backbones, from lack of food.* Yet, they were victorious over five kings, with their well fed and well disciplined troops; who, themselves, were just before flushed with victory! It ought not to surprise us, if the learned expositors were to claim the honor of this victory, by declaring it to have been a miracle, wrought as a prospective glory of their own "patriarchal institution."

The record of that victory, as given in English, reads thus: "And when Abraham heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his trained *servants*, born in his own house, three hundred and eighteen, and pursued them unto Dan."

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It must here be observed that there is no word for "*servants*" in the Hebrew text. That word was inserted by the translators of King James; who was, at that time, the royal patron of slavery in the English colonies of the western world. It must also be remarked, that the word translated "armed," should read "led forth." Abraham's troops had been previously armed and trained, and he feared not to trust them with the weapons of war in their tents, at command.

But the learned critics here exclaim, "They were all born in Abraham's house;" and by these words they mean, "begotten and raised in the slave quarters." But if the mental greatness of these gentlemen would allow them to condescend and hear, they might be reminded of a few small matters in the way of *biblical exegesis.*

For instance: They might be reminded, that the Hebrew word בַּ֫יִת (*bah'-yith,*) means not only house, but has also a more extended meaning, and is used to designate even an entire country. The word translated "trained," is חָנִ֫יךְ (*chah-neech'*) an adjective not found elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible. Its related noun is חֲנִית (*chah-neeth,*) and means a spear; and the verb from which they are derived is חָנַךְ (*chah-nach'*) and the ideal meaning of this radical word is, to initiate, inaugurate, dedicate and instruct.

But the point of greatest importance for the correction of the learned critics is, that the term יְלִיד (*y'leed,*) translated "born," in the record, (Gen. xiv: 14,) is the constructive form of the verb יָלַד (*yah-lad'*) which commonly means born or brought forth, but means also, created, made, appointed. It must therefore be construed in accordance with the associations in which it is found.

With these several particulars, the learned Professors and Doctors of Theology are, of course, well acquainted; but their mental greatness does not admit of their condescending to such small affairs, even when teaching the sacred science of exegetical theology. But they know these things to be so, or their academic honors have been most strangely won, and as unworthily conferred.

The inspired record, when correctly understood, informs us that Abraham led forth a troop of three hundred and eighteen

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expert and well disciplined spearmen, whom he had appointed and trained, on his own establishment, and who were dedicated to the art of defensive war. They were equal to deeds of surprising valor and renown, for they were free in spirit as the mountain air, and dauntless as they were free, and they were brave and victorious, because that the blessings of social liberty and political independence were theirs, in company with their noble and venerated chief.

But the patrons of slavedom imagine that they have yet a resource in the history of the misrepresented patriarch. They tell us that "an angel from Heaven arrested the fugitive slave Hagar, and sent her immediately back to her mistress."

I wish to treat them fairly, and will therefore examine their assumed resource. Hagar was a dark featured beauty, given to Abraham by Pharaoh, in token of his own appreciation of contrastive female charms. She came into the family of Abraham in the days when her beauteousness was budding into the charms of developed existence; but she lived in his family as in the sanctuary of her own mother's embrace. This may appear strange in the history of a reputed slaveholder, but such was in reality the fact.

However, Sarah was childless, and desired to have a babe by proxy; and in accordance with ancient and oriental ideas, she desired that Hagar might become a subordinate wife to Abraham—a relation at that time esteemed to be honorable and chaste.

In process of time, Hagar became proud of her position and her prospects. She annoyed Sarah, and Abraham gave consent that she should be reproved and corrected. Beyond the shadow of a doubt, Sarah had recourse only to the defensive weapon of womanhood, which is the tongue, and of which an afflictive use might be made. Sarah in this way afflicted Hagar, (Gen. xvi: 6; the translation gives a stronger coloring than the original requires, or than its domestic usages would justify,) and as she could neither brook it nor retaliate, *she fled;* for she too, had the spirit of a woman within her.

Hagar fled; but there were no blood hounds on her track; she fled—but Abraham did not pursue; neither did he offer a reward for her being taken "*dead or alive.*" But if Abraham

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had been a slaveholder, and a worthy member of that tenacious species, he would doubtless have so done, and the accursed Canaanites would have sprung, with alacrity, in pursuit. But Hagar went freely on her way, and when so inclined, she rested beside a fountain of water; and here it is, that the learned and titled adversaries of freedom raise their exulting heads and cry out, "*Yes, and an angel from heaven arrested her on the spot, and sent her directly back to her mistress.*"

The angel of the Lord did, in truth, find Hagar beside the fountain of water.—(Gen. ch. xvi.) May I ask you to pause beside that fountain, beneath the palm trees' shade, and there listen to the words of the celestial Commissioner, who mildly inquired into the causes of her flight. Hear his persuasive tones, while he speaks to Hagar words of consolation and hope. He assures her of *that* which, then, was the *beau ideal* of a youthful woman's heart; he tells her of innumerable multitudes that shall arise as the fruit of her own maternity; he tells her that her expected babe shall become a *free, independent and unconquerable man;* and he gives her to understand that his bright predictions and her brightening hopes must begin to be realized beneath the paternal eye and fostering love of Abraham. He therefore directs her to return home to Abraham's tent, and to behave towards Sarah with becoming humility and respect; and he tells her plainly the reason why he was commissioned to meet her at the fountain, viz: because the Lord had heard her afflictions and sympathized in her grief.

Now, can you not imagine that you have just heard the soothing accents and persuasive words of a United States Commissioner, in the Court House of Boston or Philadelphia? Was it not to such touching and melting appeals that Anthony Burns so cheerfully yielded at Boston, but against which Jane Johnson, at Philadelphia, did so naughtily rebel? And was not Passmore Williamson justly deprived of his birth-right liberty, for contempt of such heavenly authority, enforced with such heavenly affection, and by the presentation of such rainbow hopes? If you cannot conceive and discern all this, it must be because your minds were not developed beneath a southern sky; and consequently you cannot conceive of the mental greatness attained to in that sunny and seraphic land. Of course the southern the-

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ologians can recognize the resemblance which you are not able to perceive; for otherwise, they would not dare to intimate that the celestial Messenger was the prototype of the terrestrial Commissioner.

But again: Hagar's son grew in stature, and was remarkable for his natural endowments. At this we cannot marvel; for he possessed a Caucasian soul in an Ethiopic body. From his mother he had derived the imaginative and sportive proclivities, arising from her young, warm, African blood; and in this way he was incited to make sport of his younger brother—the child of Sarah's mysterious conception. Sarah witnessed the unbrotherly conduct of Ishmael, and her anger was kindled, so that she desired of Abraham that both Hagar and her son should be dismissed from the patriarchal household. This was the utmost of her wrath—the thunder and lightning of her revenge—and it is a convincing proof that Sarah's ideas of Abraham's patriarchal institution were in strong contrast with those of the learned theologians, by whom the reputation of her husband is so shamefully abused.

The hour of departure arrived, when Hagar and Ishmael went forth together from the tent of the patriarch. They went forth, with supplies from Abraham's hand, accompanied by his prayers, and followed by the yearnings of his affection. They had God himself as their Protector, and the angel of the Lord for their guide. They dwelt in peace and happy prosperity at Paran; and the persuasive words of the angel, spoken beside the fountain of water seventeen years before, had begun to be fulfilled. [Gen. xxi: 1–21.]

Now, let us turn and view the patriarchal institution that is the pride and glory of the South. We go to Maryland or Virginia, and look in upon the establishment of one of the first families of the land, that we may there behold the sunny side of slavery, and recognize a resemblance to the scenes we have just reviewed. There is a woman, advancing in years, whose traces of feminine beauty tell of her youthful charms; charms that had been appropriated by the arbitrary will of him who called her his slave. Her son, in many respects, resembles the son of Hagar; for he has an Anglo-Saxon soul in an Ethiopic body. By reason of the mirthful sportiveness derived after the

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manner of Ishmael, he is incited to make sport of his younger brother, the darling and pride of his father's haughty spouse. This is witnessed by that imperious lady, and she determines to be at once revenged on the mother, and on the son. *Her will is law; her jealousy is fearful fate!*

We will not dwell upon the scenes in the "whipping house"—the torture or the shame. Neither will we listen to the words of sale between the trader and the modern patriarch. But we will look into the bleeding and breaking hearts of that mother and that son, when fiercely driven from their home. *Home did I say?*

Home of the slave! What can be *home* to him,
Who has no wife, no child, no kin, no self?
Who is a *thing*, a *chattel*,—has *no soul*,
And has no value but the rule of pelf!

Home of the slave!—Keen, bitter, burning words!
Mock not the woes, from which you cannot save!
Foxes have holes, and birds of air their nests;
But man enslav'd has nothing—*but a grave!*

I say not, therefore, driven "*from their home.*" But now, see that mother and that son, driven out like guilty felons, manacled, crushed and torn asunder, never more to meet on earth. Filled with frenzied but smothered agony, the mother is consigned to the cotton fields of Alabama; and the son to the canebrakes of Louisiana,—there to be worn and wasted, and terrified and tortured, till death shall bring release. *Blessed Abraham! are these the atrocities they practice in thy dishonored name?*

But, Southern Slavery *is* a patriarchal institution, notwithstanding all that I have now said. The theologians tell us that it has a god for its patron, and a patriarch for its friend; and this saying of theirs is true; they have only made a mistake as to the name and attributes of the patron and the friend. They have mistaken the name of Abraham for that of *impious* Ham; and they have misapplied the holy name of Jehovah, the covenant God of Israel, instead of rightly applying the horrid name of Moloch, the patriarchal god of the Canaanites; Moloch, whose established worship was merciless cruelty, and whose malignant delight was in innocent blood.

But, the learned patrons of slavedom must now be met and encountered, in what they represent to be, the stronghold and

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bulwark of their peculiar institution. They have made a confident appeal to the laws of Moses and of God; and in so doing they allege that, "in the institutes of Moses, chattel slavery is distinctly authorized and expressly approved."

This allegation requires to be calmly and critically examined. I must, therefore, count upon your forbearance and quiet attention, while I proceed to examine and disclose, the spirit and form of the laws of Moses relative to bounden service among the Israelites in their own land. In order to a just and discreet procedure, it must be premised:

1. That the municipal laws of Moses were limited to the nation of Israel. Their extension to any nation of the Gentiles was neither contemplated nor allowed. They were peculiar and provisional laws, given to a peculiar and only half civilized people.

2. In the eastern world, and particularly among the ancients, it was customary for persons, when poor, to dispose of their rights of labor for their own advantage and the benefit of their respective families. With this custom and its abuses, the Israelites were acquainted, and they were an obdurate and rebellious people. And in view of these facts, certain laws and statutes were provided in the legislation of Moses, the servant of God.

In relation to Hebrew servitude, the law of Moses was given as a statute of limitations, and involved both the principle and form of prohibitory law. The object in view was to restrain the Israelites from oppressing their poor brethren, whose poverty might induce them to dispose of their rights of labor for a time, and to this end certain specific provisions were made.

Every just law is founded on some principle of equity and truth, and the principle on which these laws were established, is this, namely: *that every man possesses an inherent and social right to dispose of his labor in the way that he may judge best, or that his circumstances may most urgently require.*

On this principle it was provided that the rights of labor should be freely offered and yielded up on the one side, and that on the other side they should be justly acquired; that the purchased rights of labor should not involve any right or pretension to a right of property in the persons of those who had covenanted to serve, and that the period of bounden service should be limited to six years. Besides these just and equitable provisions,

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the year of jubilee was ordained; on the first day of which, all the rights of labor and of property that had been in any way pledged or pawned, were declared to be *absolutely released and free.*"—(Lev. viii: 17.)

These were the laws of Moses in relation to Hebrew servitude; but, by their just exhibition, I have merely captured and destroyed an outwork of the adversary's reputed stronghold. The theological jurists of slavedom maintain, "that the institutes of Moses provided for the enslavement of persons not being Israelites, and that, in this way, God himself established chattel slavery; which consequently has the Bible for its foundation."

Without hesitation I admit that in the laws of Moses a *permission* was granted to the Israelites for the purchase of human service in perpetuity from persons of other nations and tribes. But, in order that this permission may be correctly understood, certain particulars must here also be premised:

1. The permission granted to the Israelites was inserted as a *sufferance* clause in a statute of limitations, involving the principle and form of a prohibitory law.

2. A permissive clause in a prohibitory law is no evidence that the thing permitted is, *per se*, good and right, and therefore to be approved; neither is it an evidence that under any other circumstances it would have been, at all, allowed.

3. The prohibitory law in which this clause is found, is itself a proof of the existence of active moral evil, that required to b dealt with in the way of legislative considerateness. This legislative wisdom and forbearance were necessary, in order to effect the judicious restraint intended, and also to uphold the authority and honor of the law.

Other particulars also require our regard: In the Book of Ezekiel, the God of Israel reproves and rebukes that people; and, by reason of their excessive wickedness, he says: "Wherefore I gave them statutes that were not good, and judgments whereby they should not live."—(Ezek. xx: 25.) And when the Pharisees applied to the Son of God relative to the Mosaic law of divorce, he said: "Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, suffered you to put away your wives; but from the beginning it was not so."—(Matt. xix: 3–8.)

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This reply of the Divine Teacher includes certain principles of divine government that relate immediately to the subject under review. We thus learn:

1. That in the primitive constitution of nature and of social life, God ordained *that*, which, *in itself*, is good and right for man, and for social and civil society.

2. That the Israelites were given certain laws that were not in accordance with the primitive ordinations of God for the good of man in social life and civil society.

3. That the occasion of these permissive laws was not in the disposition and will of God, but in the obduracy and selfishness of the Israelites, to whom they were allowed.

4. That the reasons for these permissive and provisional laws were worthy of the perfections and government of God, because they were founded in the divine forbearance, and were designed for the prevention of a greater evil, in the history of personal and social existence.

In a word:—It was necessary that the Israelites should be governed by means of modified laws, for otherwise they must have been destroyed, by the absolute justice and holiness of God; and they were thus dealt with and preserved, by reason of the purposes of God in his merciful kindness towards the world at large.

These weighty principles are sufficient to deter an enlightened and upright mind from admitting that the laws of Moses afford a divine sanction to the slavery of the South. But I now observe, that the clause by which the Israelites were *suffered* to purchase the perpetual services of other persons, is inserted in a law designed to restrain them from the commission of a social and national wrong.

The permissive clause in question is found in the Book Leviticus. In the commonly received English version, there is a complexion given to this clause that may be used in the way of special pleading, as an apology for the enslavement of men. But this complexion the original Hebrew does not wear; and for its presence and origin in the English version I can readily account. For this purpose a few particulars will suffice. These I will ask you to observe:

The African slave trade was commenced by the English in 1563, when negroes from the Guinea coast were first conveyed to

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the West India colonies. In 1603, James Stuart ascended the throne of England under the title of James I. Between 1604 and 1611, the received version was made and completed by his command. It was thus prepared under the surveillance of that notorious asserter of the "divine right of kings;" the man by whose order the Revelation of God was made to appear, to teach the usurped *supremacy* of one man over a nation.

At that time slavery and the slave trade were in fresh and vigorous operation, and therefore, it is not a matter of surprise that the English translation should wear the complexion described. James required that the Bible should teach Christian men to be subject to the King *as supreme*, and he was then the royal patron of the African slave trade.

To show the association of ideas entertained by royalty on the subject of slavery, I remind you that Queen Anne directed the colonial government of New-York, to take care "that the Almighty should be devoutly and duly served, according to the rites of the Church of England, and also that the Royal African Company should be encouraged; and that the colony should have a constant and sufficient supply of *merchantable negroes* at moderate rates." These are the words of the record.

Impressed by considerations such as these facts suggest, I have carefully examined the Hebrew text; and present a translation in strict accordance with the spirit and form of the law, viz:

"And any subject men servants, and permanent maid servants that ye may acquire, shall be of the heathen, who are round about: of them ye may buy men servants and maid servants. Also, of the aliens that sojourn among you, of them ye may buy, and of their families that are with you, that they have begotten in your land; them ye may retain. And ye may retain them for your children after you, to hold by succession, a retained servitude, and ye may serve yourselves of them in perpetuity." (Lev. xxv. 39–55,—particularly verses 44–46.)

This is a true and just statement of the sufferance law in question, which, like the sufferance clause in the law of matrimony, was permitted because of hardness of heart; and was designed to prevent a great social evil, that otherwise would certainly have transpired.

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Let it now be observed, that "the heathen round about," of whose services the Israelites might avail themselves, were chiefly, if not entirely, the Canaanites, whose abominations I have noticed, and who were a nuisance upon the earth.

When the Israelites came up out of Egypt, the long suffering of God had given place to his retributive justice, and a commission was given that the Canaanites should be destroyed. This was in part executed, but many were allowed still to live, and in this also, the will of God was concerned. The Canaanites had forfeited their liberty and their lives, but a respite was granted them, and instead of being confined for life in a sort of state prison, and kept to hard labor, they were allowed to live at large, in a subordinate and dependant state.

They were declared criminals, as judged by the governmental equity and justice of God over the tribes and nations of the earth; and in the constitution of the freest state on earth, it is provided that involuntary servitude shall be one of the penalties of crime; *but God did not authorize the involuntary servitude of even these criminal Canaanites.* The permissive law extended only to this, viz: that if any of the heathen round about wished to barter their liberty and labor for their own personal and social advantage, in that case the Israelites were permitted to avail themselves of the same, for a satisfactory price and provision.

Again: The land promised to the patriarchs had become the land of Israel, by virtue of that promise. No other persons could claim or acquire a right to any part of that land. But the Israelites were not to refuse a residence to the alien who might desire to sojourn among them. Such strangers they were strictly commanded not to *oppress.* But if any of those aliens desired to dispose of their liberty and labor, as individuals or as families, to secure the resources of a permanent home, in that case also, the Israelites might avail themselves of the same fair and honorable terms.

These were the provisions of the permissive law, that has been so grievously misrepresented and abused. Involuntary servitude was neither established nor permitted by the laws of Moses and of God. This will be made still more evident by a consideration of the law that forbids the use of violence and wrong to effect any

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such purpose. That law reads thus: "He that stealeth a man and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death."—(Exod. xxi: 16.)

Should an Israelite dare to use force and wrong against any man of any nation or tribe, (the law says "a man," had it been limited to Israelites, it would have said *his brother*,) by robbing him of his inherent and social rights of liberty and labor, whether he sold that man, or sought to retain him in a state of involuntary servitude to himself, he would do so at the peril and by the forfeiture of his own life; the words are clear and strong: "he shall surely be put to death." The crime of man-stealing, and of the perpetration of involuntary servitude, was a capital offence, because that, next to murder, it was the highest crime known to the law, as possible against a fellow man. In a word, it was high treason against the inherent and social rights of humanity.

But further: The Israelites were not permitted to use personal violence against their servants; nor to treat them as if they were not men like themselves. As long as they were treated justly and not oppressed, so long they might be retained; but personal violence cancelled the legally purchased right which the master had acquired. For example, it was thus enacted: "If any man smite the eye of his man servant, or the eye of his maid, that it perish, he shall let him go free for his eye's sake. And if he smite out his man servant's tooth, or his maid servant's tooth, he shall let him go free for his tooth's sake.—(Exod. xxi: 26, 27.

Such were the laws of Moses and of God relative to human servitude. They were founded on justice and equity; were benevolent in their conception, and merciful in their design; and they were only provisional and temporary, instead of being permanently ordained. Centuries before the national polity and municipal administration of the Israelites had ceased, the permissive law we have reviewed, was itself *revoked*. As early as the days of Isaiah the prophet, it was revoked. In the exercise of his supreme right and merciful disposition, the God of Israel disowned that law, because it had been abused, and by its abuse men had been oppressed.

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He commanded Isaiah to convict the Israelites of their sins, and rebuke them for their iniquities. He condemned their sanctimonious pretensions to piety and religiousness; particularly in the matter of their formal fasts. He expressed his abhorrence of their exactions, oppression and violence; and while reprobating the ostentatious hypocrisy of their formal fasts, by the very observance of which they were self-condemned, he inquired, saying: "Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, AND THAT YE BREAK EVERY YOKE."—(Isaiah lviii: 1–6.) No vestige of bounden servitude could lawfully remain. The sufferance law had been abused by the Israelites. It had been abused for the purposes of unjust restraint, of exhausting labor, and of oppressive coercion, and for these reasons it was *discredited, disowned, revoked.* And by this act of entire revocation, God vindicated the honor of his legislative authority, asserted the equity of his will, and declared the merciful dispositions of his heart towards all that are oppressed by involuntary and slavish toil.

But, notwithstanding that the laws of God never permitted involuntary servitude, but on the contrary forbade it, under the penalty of death, and although the permissive law allowed for a season, was subsequently revoked—notwithstanding these weighty considerations, there are learned men, professed expositors of the word and will of God, who presumptuously claim the authority of his sacred word, and the sanction of his holy name, for that abominable thing which his soul hateth! And there are men in "high places" of authority, and aspirants after political power, who are now seeking to extend that hateful abomination, and who have the audacity to tell us that they are acting under the sanction of God's Bible, and are the executive of his will. *May the Holy One frustrate their counsels! May the just and merciful God deprive them of their evil power! May he not suffer "the workers of iniquity" to blast the fair territories of the land!*

I believe that the LORD has provided this land as a resource for the needy, and a refuge for the oppressed; and, by the intimations of prophecy, I believe that he has designed it as a refuge and resting place for his persecuted saints, when the atheistical

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despotism of Europe shall yet arise, confederate and rampant, against the truth, and the confessors of the Son of God.

An intimation of this was given when the Mayflower touched the shores of Massachusetts, and the "Pilgrim Fathers" landed on "Plymouth Rock." And, if I mistake not, an indication is at this time being given, in the uprising of multitudinous minds, demanding that the territories be held sacred to *freedom;* and that their prairies be cultured by none but the *free.*

I say not that the movement will at present succeed. *God grant that it may!* But if not now, yet in a little while, from the coast of Maine to the Ohio and the Mississippi, and across the Rocky Mountains to the coast of the Pacific ocean, and back again to the coast of Maine—myriads of voices will be heard—as the combined sonorous sound of many waters—demanding that the encroachments of slavedom be stayed, and that the usurpers of constitutional power be hurled down from the "high places" of the land; and then, *vox populi vox Dei* will be illustriously *true.*

But, I must once more ask your calm attention to the laws of Moses and of God. In the statute book of Moses *a fugitive slave law* is recorded. It is in these words: "Thou shalt not deliver unto his master the servant that is escaped from his master unto thee: he shall dwell with thee, even among you, in that place that he shall choose, even in one of thy gates, where it liketh him best. Thou shalt not oppress him."—(Deut. xxiii: 15, 16.)

There are certain principles of equity and mercy included in this law which an intelligent jurist would immediately perceive:

1. We are shown that God acknowledged in the fugitive from involuntary servitude an oppressed human being, whose desire for freedom was natural, just and right.

2. In ordaining this law, God acknowledged the inherent right of the bondman to escape, if he could, from the service and power of his oppressor.

3. He provided for the escaped fugitive a refuge and a home among freemen, from whatever quarter he may have fled.

4. God ordained that the escaped man should be free from all social restraint that would not be imposed on the freest Israelite in the land.

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5. He provided that the man thus emancipated, or whose right to freedom was thus sanctioned by law, should be at full liberty to settle and reside in any part of the land, wherever he preferred.

6. God expressly commanded that no advantage should be taken of him, neither should he be reproached with his previous bondage, nor undervalued by reason of his origin and kin. All this and more is included in the command, "Thou shalt not oppress him."

7. The escaped fugitive was signally favored of God, in that he, alone, of all strangers and foreigners, was invested with a legal right to settle and abide on the land of Israel.

By this sevenfold provision of Mosaic law, the God of Israel gave the sanction of his absolute supremacy and holy name, to the principle that the escaped fugitive possessed the social right of a freeman, to "*life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness*" on earth. When this became known abroad, it formed a rainbow of promise and hope before the eye of the oppressed bondman; and in the centre of that beauteous arch stood the angel of liberty, sent from the presence of the Eternal, to smile upon and beckon to him, and thus speak to his heart of a welcome and a home among the sons and daughters of *the free.*

This law had God for its author and freedom for its end. But *there is another* "Fugitive slave law," of an opposite origin, and for an antagonist end. Its congressional authors have won a heritage of shame. The men by whom it was conceived have a record of dark disgrace in the history of Republican legislation. The judges who have enforced and twisted its provisions, to afflict alike the fugitive and the free, have become infamous in the annals of forensic procedure. And the man who had the power to have crushed the venemous thing, and caused it to perish of an untimely birth; the man who held the right of *veto*, the palladium of freedom in his hand, but held it back in the hour of freedom's peril; what must be thought of him?

He, the official representative of the champions of LIBERTY, who bled for her cause, and laid the foundation of her throne,—he consummated that *bill of wrongs*, and the beauteous virgin fell into the hands of her confederate and incontinent foes; and they sought to humble her, and to lay her honor in the dust.

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But, by her native purity and dignity, she repelled them; and gathering her robe about her, she sought in the Senate Hall a vindication of her insulted honor; and in that Senate Hall she was stricken to the earth, when, *by a stealthy and ruffian hand*, the classic SUMNER fell; and straightway her enemies cast her out, bleeding and faint, where now she lies, despised and scorned, on Kansas' blighted plains! And shall not her honor be avenged? And shall not her health and vigor be restored? Freemen, she turns her tearful eyes towards you, and waits for your reply.

Utterance would fail me to express a part of the grief I feel at the dark compliance by which LIBERTY was betrayed. The oligarchy of slavedom called to the man in power, and said,

> Fill, fill to the brim the federal bowl,
> And pass it round the land;
> Let the fugitive drink the wormwood and gall,
> While earth and heaven shall stand.

And he did fill, and more than fill, with worse than *Upas* distillation. And the cup of wo is filled, and is replenished, that the trembling fugitive should drink of it, *from the dishonored hand of freemen*, to whom he had fled for refuge from the presence of his merciless oppressors. *I hate that slave law with unutterable hate; because it is most hateful to God!*

Should any one demand my motives for thus giving expression to my thoughts, I answer, in the words of an ancient Roman, "I am a *man*; and that which concerns *man*, concerns *me*;" again, I am a *freeman*, and the freedom I love, I wish all to enjoy; and still again, and above all, *I am a Christian, and that which concerns the Bible, concerns me.*

The Bible is dishonored and defamed by the theological patrons of slavedom, and by the political advocates of the extension of slavery, the God of the Bible is blasphemed. The theologians have essayed to interpret prophecy, and they have failed. They have made pretensions to the philosophy of sacred history, and the vanity of their pretensions has been shown. They have assumed to be enlightened jurists, but have only proved that the light within them is darkness.

They made their confident appeal to the Bible, and before the tribunal of the Bible they have been arraigned. They brought

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into court, Noah, Abraham and Moses, and by the testimony of these, their chosen witnesses, they have been convicted of moral blindness, hardness of heart, and contempt of God's word and commandment. And from the inner sanctuary of the Mosaic Tabernacle, from the Shecheenal glory on the Mercy Seat, between the Cherubim, a voice is heard, saying, "THEY ARE FALSE TO THE BIBLE, FALSE TO HUMANITY, AND FALSE TO GOD."

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